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GREEK NEWSPAPER ACCUSED OF WIRETAPPING N.Y. TIMES BUREAU
BY JAMES M. DORSEY
ATHENS, GREECE

Greece's largest circulation daily newspaper has been accused of illegally wiretapping the telephones of The New York Times' Athens reporter, legal documents revealed Wednesday.

George Bobolas and Alexander Filippopoulos, publisher and editor in chief of the newspaper Ethnos, were charged in an indictment filed July 10 by District Attorney Leonidas Lazarakos. The indictment also accused them of publishing transcripts made from the wiretaps.

Bobolas and Filippopoulos have denied the charges, which are expected to be heard in court Dec. 13 along with several related suits and countersuits.

The charges stem from excerpts Ethnos published last year of a taped conversation between Paul Anastasi, a New York Times stringer based in Athens, and lawyer Panayotis Zotis. Ethnos described Anastasi and Zotis as CIA agents.

The conversation focused on a book Anastasi published 16 months ago, "Take the Nation in Your Hands," in which he described Ethnos as the first Western newspaper to be published in cooperation with the KGB, the Soviet intelligence service.

Ethnos, a left-wing publication with a circulation of 110,000, said Anastasi and Zotis were discussing the undermining of Greek democracy, the possibility of "extending their destabilizing activities to other European countries" and threats to murder Ethnos staff.

The newspaper said the tapes were mailed to it "by persons from Anastasi's group of agents who apparently disagreed with the murderous plans of their patrons and decided to warn us against the intentions of this ruthless group."

"Ethnos' allegations are vulgar nonsense," said Anastasi. "The conversation was deliberately distorted so as to discredit me and my revelations about Ethnos' connections with the KGB."

Bobolas, 59, and Filippopoulos, 57, were charged after failing to produce the parcel in which they said they had received the tapes, said Ziris Constantinou, a lawyer for Anastasi.

The charges said the two arranged the wiretap "with no legal right, obligation or legitimate interest and without the permission of a court authority."

If convicted, Bobolas and Filippopoulos face prison sentences of up to five years each.

The charges against Ethnos will be heard as part of a series of suits and countersuits resulting from the publication of the Anastasi book. Among them is Anastasi's appeal of his libel and defamation case.

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WIRETAP
ATHENS, GREECE

Athens' District Attorney charged Greece's largest circulation daily, Ethnos, with illegally tapping the telephone of The New York Times' Athens bureau, according to legal documents released today.

The documents revealed that Ethnos' publisher George Bobolas and editor in chief Alexander Filippopoulos were also charged with publishing the content of the illegally acquired tapes. They have denied the charges.

The indictments were confirmed by Ziris Constantinou, a lawyer for The New York Times.

Ethnos, a left-wing publication, ran excerpts of a taped conversation between Paul Anastasi, an Athens-based Times correspondent of Cypriot origin, and Panayotis Zotis, a lawyer.

The conversation focused on a book published by Anastasi 16 months ago in which he described Ethnos as the first Western newspaper to be published in cooperation with the KGB, the Soviet intelligence service.

Ethnos described the content of a tape it published as a conversation between two CIA agents, who were discussing the undermining of Greek democracy, possibilities of "extending their destabilizing activities to other European countries," and threats to murder Ethnos staff.

There was no immediate comment from the Times, but Anastasi said: "The Ethnos allegations are vulgar nonsense. The conversation was deliberately distorted so as to discredit me and my revelations about Ethnos' connections with the KGB."

Ethnos said the tapes were mailed to it "by persons from Anastasi's group of agents who apparently disagreed with the murderous plans ... and decided to warn us against the intentions of this ruthless group."

Bobolas and Filippopoulos denied the wiretapping charges but were charged after failing to produce the post office parcel in which they said they had received the tapes, Constantinou said.

The latest charges against Ethnos will be heard in court in December as part of a series of suits and counter-suits resulting from the publication of Anastasi's book.

Anastasi is appealing to the Greek Supreme Court against his sentencing by an appeals court to one year in prison for libel and defamation of Ethnos.